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Shaving Bazar

IS ON MAIN STREET, OVER

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They would be pleased to wait on all who may call on them.

THE BIBLE AND TEMPERANCE.

Sermon preached by Rev. A. C.

Biddle of the Cumberland

Presbyterian Church.

Who is the Saloon-keeper's Friend?

"Woe unto them that are mighty in drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink."—Isa. 5:22.

I come now, in the course of my

pulpit work, to speak to a subject

that demands more attention at the

hands of American citizens than all

the other questions, social or political,

now before the people. I mean the

temperance question. The election

of a President, his inauguration on

the 4th of March, and the appoint-

ment of his cabinet, were all matters

of very grave interest to the average

American; but as a citizen of the

republic I point you to an issue which

in interest rises infinitely above these.

When the great eastern plague reaches

our shores, and the yellow flag is

hoisted in Savannah, Charleston, or

in New Orleans, and we read of the

suffering and the sorrow, the dying

and the dead, how the whole nation

seems to shrink back appalled at the

terrible ravages of death; but there is

a plague already among us, coming

not from the shores of Asia, but from

the regions of eternal fire and damned

spirits—a plague whose sign is not the

yellow flag, but the "red light" and

the "green blind"—whose death-roll

out numbers 50,000 the work of yellow

fever or of cholera. Collect all the

work of this plague into the columns

of one daily, and you might read

each morning the tragedy of over 200

deaths for every morning of the year.

So steadily has this awful ulcer been

growing upon the body politic

through the years, that to-day it costs

more to take care of the sore than the

body upon which it grows. It yearly

destroys more lives than we have

employed in both army and navy.

The annual drink bill of the U. S. is

900 millions of dollars, \$2 millions

more than the cost of all the bread

and meat consumed by the nation.

The direct and indirect cost of its li-

quor would pay for the U. S. Army,

its boats and ships, its public schools,

and leave over 70 millions still in

pockets of the people. It would pay

off our National debt in one year.

The total wealth of the U. S. is less

than 50 billions of dollars. In 25

years the drink of the nation will

have drowned every farm, every R. R.,

every shop, every factory, and every

church in the land. Do you wonder

at hard times? Do you wonder at the

scarcity of money? I wonder,

rather, that the nation lives at all

with such a drain upon its vitality.

If we go on at this rate, our living

must become a race of paupers, and our

dead the drunkards. Here is a terrible

wrong, and some one is to blame; and

I here charge those in authority over

us with aiding and abetting in the

theft of nearly 2000 million dollars

annually from the people; and the

national government with high treas-

on in creating and fostering a scheme

which drains us of every dollar of

our inheritance four times in a cen-

tury. Hard times? Business failures?

Bad debts? Higher taxes? Increase

of crime? No wonder!

But leaving out the drunkard and

his immediate family, there are two

classes of people suffering more from

the liquor curse than any other. I

speak of the saloon-keeper and the

tax-payer. For the present I will

devote myself to a plea for the bar-

tender, leaving temperance and the

tax-payer for future consideration.

But what plea can a temperance man

make for the saloon-keeper? I know

I am conscientious when I answer,

they are many and strong. In the

first place this class makes no little

figure in our table of statistics. In

California, a State with a population

of less than 900,000, there are 12,000

saloon-keepers; and in the States and

Territories of our land there stands

behind the decanter an army of over

300,000! Of this vast army of men I

wish to speak to-night; of these 300,

000 men who are based on every hand

as no other men on earth; who are

villified and demeaned, and harassed

with all the shame and degradation

of the traffic, while those to whom

they sell and for whom they sell, go

uncared, or worse still, are jeered and

condemned as having been inveigled

by the saloon-keeper into his den.

The pulpit and the temperance lec-

turer have both made a sad mistake.

They have represented the saloon-

keeper as a great spider spreading

his net for the taking of the unwary

fly; but this is not right. The fly is

already caught behind the green blind

and the appetites of a hundred men

and his own greed for gold will keep

him there. In our dealings with the

saloon-keeper we have all made the

sad mistake of considering him a

criminal. I tell you he is not a criminal.

He is a citizen, and as a citizen is en-

titled to the rights of a free man.

But as a fact, he enjoys few of the

higher privileges of citizenship. He

is relegated to the catalogue of crim-

inals, he is placed under the ban of

social ostracism by man his brother,

and under a fearful curse by God his

Maker. And whatever else man may

do, God never punishes a man with-

out having given him sufficient warn-

ing. The saloon-keeper has a right

to hear the law—the divine fiat—and

to know the penalty for its violation.

And that is why I speak to-night. It

is his right to be saved and not to

suffer.

At the fifth chapter of Isaiah, be-

ginning at the twenty-second verse,

there is a woe pronounced upon two

classes of men—those who drink a

great deal; and those who mix the

drink for them. Hear it: "Woe unto

them that are mighty to drink wine,

and men of strength to mingle strong

drink:—Therefore as the fire drowns

the stubble, and the flame consumes

the chaff, so their root shall be as

rottenness, and their blossom shall

go up as dust." Now, I find here

more than the woe pronounced;

I find the reason for the visitation of

such calamity upon them. This is the

word of God, and this is my text.

This is the sword of the Spirit, and

with this sword I would to God I

might to-night strike such a blow as

should sever the shackles which bind

300,000 men to a business which

promises only woe and death.

Another reason rises right here why

the saloon-keeper deserves sympathy

and help rather than suffering and

harm; and that is he is boldly de-

fied as to who are his friends. He is

like the horse in a burning stable,

blinded by the glare of the fire

which shall consume him. He be-

lieves that his deadliest enemy is his

best friend. No one has ever tried to

impress upon him that the minister

is infinitely a truer friend than the

drum-drinker. He is told that the

preacher wants to ruin him and be-

gar his children; while the truth is,

the minister wants to save family

and business and body and soul from

the awful curse of an incensed God.

"He puts darkness for light, and light

for darkness." He tells you the

County Judge is his friend, and boasts

how he will vote for him. Is the

County Judge his friend? Every

time your County Judge licenses a

man to sell liquor, his hands are

eyes with a revenue stamp, and delib-

erately pushes him toward the open

jaws of a hell he himself would shun.

Is the City Council his friend? Every

time these men grant him a permit

to keep a saloon they place themselves

either in the attitude of deniers of the

word of God, or they say to the

saloon-keeper: "Go ahead! We know

God hath said it is death and hell if

you do go on; but if you don't see it

that way, go ahead. The streets need

repairing any way." Ah, it is like

paving our streets with souls, and

raising the gutters with blood. A

brave City Council that dares to grant

where God has forbidden—that dares

to write "all right" where God has

written his woe!

But I am the saloon-keeper's friend,

and so it is by pleading with him, he

comes out from a business that does

the world no good, and must inevi-

tably bring down the curse of God upon

himself and family. The Lord says,

"Their root shall be as rottenness,

and their blossom shall go up as dust."

Whoever heard of a great man who

had been a bar-keeper for half his

life? No biographer writes of his fa-

mous subject. He was a mixer of

drinks until he was grown. From

every trade in life some have stepped

upon the car of ruin; from this

trade none! From such schools great-

ness never graduates. The curse of

God is upon it. While his children

are growing they are taunted upon

the streets with the father's business;

and when they are grown it is said

of the son, "Manly fellow; would

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